

Dear Sir:

Enclosed to you is a copy of  
a paper I recently wrote— "Lines by Byron".

I have enjoyed reading your publications  
on the early poets and I hope to  
contribute by sending you some poems. Any  
donations, no matter how meagre, will be gratefully  
accepted.

This paper is not for publication-- too  
much of it is speculation.

Very truly yours,

E. Spacy  
1111 1111

P.S. If you are at liberty to  
give out Mr. Green's and Mr.  
Glasco's addresses I would  
appreciate them. They are not  
listed in the AWA directory.

Aug 8, 67

## DIES BY WYON

Immediately after the peace talks between the Americans and the British following the Revolutionary War, efforts were made by Robert Morris, the Financier of the Revolution, to create a "Mint of North America". According to well documented findings nothing, except a few pattern pieces with NOVA CONSTELLATIO on the obverse and LIBERTAS-JUSTITIA on the reverse, ever came of these efforts.

A large number of copper coins with the same legends and dated 1783 and 1785 were collected in later years and investigators in the mid-1800's concluded that these were "made in Birmingham, in England, and the dies were cut by Wyon, of that place. They were manufactured by order of a gentleman from New York, who is believed to have been Gouverneur Morris." (1)

The die cutter referred to is Thomas Wyon, Sr., who was in business with his brother Peter as General Die Engravers in Birmingham up to 1800. (2) A careful reading of Crosby (Reference 1) shows that all of the following coins were concluded to come from "dies by Wyon"--- because of a similarity of style, or letter punches, or devises, or mulings. According to Crosby, "Dies by Wyon" were the following:

1. NOVA CONSTELLATIO coppers  
many dies 1783 & 1785
2. CONFEDERATIO coppers  
two dies 1785
3. IMMUNE COLUMBIA 1785

(1) Ref. #1, p. 331

(2) Ref. #2

4. INIMICA TYRANNUS AMERICA (1785?)
5. IMMUNIS COLUMBIA 1786
6. INIMICA TYRANNUS AMERICANA (1786?)
7. GEN. WASHINGTON (Maris-4) No Date
8. A New Jersey reverse (Maris-C)  
No Date
9. E PLURIBUS UNUM eagle 1786
10. New York EXCELSIORS  
four dies 1787

The writer has not studied the letter punches on this list and is copying Crosby, who is very accurate on these points, in stating they are all by the same person or company of persons. But there is a very important exception in the above list. Mr. Walter Breen, acting on a report of Mr. Damon Douglas, has most definitely tied the EXCELSIORS to Ephraim Brasher and John Bailey. In fact, the list of dies and coins which Brasher and Bailey very likely made is, according to Mr. Breen's article (3), as follows:

1. Brasher Doubloons (and half--  
doubloons) 1787
2. Brasher Lima-style Doubloons (1787?)
3. EXCELSIOR coppers 1787  
(except Van Voorhis pattern)
4. NOVA EBORAC coppers 1787

(3) Ref. #3

5. A group of New Jersey coppers 1788  
(Maris 74 to 78 and bb, cc, dd)

The writer would extend this list to include dies for the following:

6. The 1788 Connecticut coppers---  
Miller dies 3,4,5, 7,B,E (all have quatrefoils)  
and 9,10,11,12,C,F,K,G. (Made for Eli  
Leavenworth:?)

7. Two VERMONT (Ryder 13 and 27) and  
imitation British half-pence for, it is  
believed, Machin Mills.

8. The group of New Jersey dies Maris  
70,71,72,73 and x,y,z,aa. Also 34,35,40 and  
V,W,b.

9. Most 1785 Connecticuts are possible  
additions.

All the above, except some of the  
Connecticut coins and those for the  
"counterfeiters", have quatrefoils in the  
legend. The others have six-point stars which  
are seen coupled with the quatrefoils on some  
Connecticut and NOVA EBORAC coppers.

Recently the writer made a careful  
comparison of the letter punches on the most  
common variety of NOVA CONSTELLATIO (1783  
pointed rays, small U.S. --- Crosby 2-B) and  
on the most common variety of NOVA EBORAC  
(Reverse seated figure facing right -- Crosby  
1-A). The letters L, B, and E are identical  
on the two coins while V, R, I, and C appear  
to be the same except showing signs of wear  
on the latter coin. The O and T are definitely  
not the same while the A and N may be in this  
same category. Of eleven letter punches  
three definitely and four possibly are the  
same. Could it be that Gouverneur Morris did

not go to England for his NOVA CONSTELLATIO but merely called on Brasher and/or Bailey closer to home? Suppose he did? Then we can say that the group under the listing of "Dies by Wyon" can actually be joined to the list under Bailey and Brasher. Then later day researchers would not have to be transporting certain dies across the Atlantic to account for some strange mulings. And other writers would not have to wonder how Thomas Jefferson's ideas for the CONFEDERATIO and INIMICA TYRANNUS AMERICANA coins could get in the hands of a firm in Birmingham when Jefferson, or any other member of the Federal government in New York, could easily travel from the Federal Building and be in a certain silversmith's shop. It would also eliminate the need to have Walter Mould bring E PLURIBUS UNUM shield dies from England, possibly before the design was chosen by or "suggested" to a Chief Justice of New Jersey. And, with lots of imagination, it might explain how a rejected, well worn IMMUNE COLUMBIA die would be muled with a die associated with a mint in Rupert, Vermont.

But there is a very serious problem to overcome. The workmanship on most of the "Dies by Wyon" is very good while an inspection of all the Brasher-Bailey coins show they were not up to the same caliber. It does not seem likely that Brasher or Bailey could have deteriorated so much in ability in four years.

JOHN BAILEY was a cutler, therefore, a worker in iron; he made scissors and knives and was also a brass founder. There was a John Bailey who advertised as a silversmith and swordmaker in New York City in 1762. He advertised in the New York Packet, May 14, 1778, when he moved from Fredricksburg to Fishkill, N.Y. Here he made the sword that Washington used throughout the Revolution. From Enscoe's

Handbook on Early Silversmiths--"John Bailey-worked as silversmith and swordmaker in N.Y.C. in 1762. Later advertised in Philadelphia in 1785". At the Historical Society of Pennsylvania they list "John Bailey- goldsmith-Cherry Alley between Third and Race Street 1783-1785". However, remembrances of his daughter did not include Philadelphia but a move direct to New York City.(4) In August 1785 he bought property on Little Dock Street. In Frank's 1787 Directory of New York City he is a member of the General Society of Merchants and Tradesmen and is not listed in the Gold and Silversmith Society. In 1787 he moved to 22 Queen St. In 1794 he seems to be the same John Bailey of 2 Little Dock Street who joined the firm of Bailey and Hedderly (New York Bell Foundry) which advertised they would cast bells(5). In November 1798 he advertised as a brass founder at 60 Water Street and was making both iron and brass articles. It would appear that in 1786, almost coincident with his moving to New York, he discontinued his silversmithing career and concentrated on the working of iron and brass.

EPHRAIM BRASHER appears to have been a silversmith of New York City all his life but left it during the British occupation from 1776 to 1783. In 1790 he lived next door to George Washington in Cherry Street.(6) In 1787 he (with Bailey) petitioned to make NOVA EBORACS and was a member of the Gold and Silversmith Society in New York. He was in New York City in 1784 as attested by this very interesting ad which appeared in the Pennsylvania Packet, May 1, 1784:

EIGHT DOLLARS REWARD, Ran-away from the subscriber, a negro man named John

(4) Ref. #4

(5) Ref. #5

(6) Ref. #6

Francis. . .by trade a goldsmith. Said negro was carried to New York and left in charge of Ephraim Brasher, goldsmith, from whom he absconded, and returned to me. . . . .whoever takes up said negro and delivers him to John Letelier, goldsmith in Market Street, or to the subscriber in New York, shall have the above reward, and all reasonable charges paid. Benjamin Halstead

Brasher was a member of New York's Evacuation Day committee in November 1783.(7) It is unlikely he moved back to the city before that date.

BENJAMIN HALSTEAD was a goldsmith and received considerable government business from making silver trinkets, arm bands, neck plates, and the like for dealing with the Indians. Dates on Benjamin Halstead are: (8)

New York	1764-1766
Elizabeth	1766
? ? ?	1767-1783
Philadelphia	1783-1785
New York	1786-1806

The above ad would place him in New York in 1784. On September 3, 1785, an ad in the Pennsylvania Gazette stated he had just opened shop between Second and Third in Arch Street, Philadelphia. He worked at Maiden Lane and Nassau Street, New York, from 1786 to 1789.

Halstead appears to have had some business relationship with Ephraim Brasher during the period 1783-5 and Bailey definitely had one immediately after this period.

(7) Ref. #7

(8) Ref. #8

## THE EARLY MINT IN NEW YORK CITY

There are a number of imaginations that can be drawn from the above facts but none are at all conclusive. One that could be made to sound possible and highly plausible is the following.

In 1783 someone, perhaps Gouverneur Morris, may have contacted Ephraim Brasher, parts unknown, and had dies made for the NOVA CONSTELLATIO coppers. By whom and where the coins were struck it is difficult to guess; the writer has no attendant circumstantial facts to even weakly support a guess of Bailey or Halstead doing the work in Philadelphia. Some, if not all, were struck in Birmingham. James Jarvis was a merchant of New York, even prior to Evacuation Day, and had sent Walter Mould to England on "some business" early in 1783 ~~when peace negotiations were under way.~~ (9) They may have been the NOVA sponsors.

In 1785 the same may have been repeated. Also, in 1785 the Congressional Committee discussing the adoption of a "decade" coin became interested in designs suggested by Thomas Jefferson. (10) Possibly they went down the street and had Brasher make the INIMICA TYRANNUS AMERICA and a couple of CONFEDERATIO dies. Another group, or perhaps the same group, was partial to IMMUNE COLUMBIA and this die may have been ordered from Brasher. (He may also have supplied NOVA punches to the group working the Vermont franchise, and since many 1785 Connecticut coppers have quatrefoils, he may have been supplying dies to New Haven as well.)

In 1786 the faulty Latin on two of the dies was noted and these were repeated:

(9) Ref. #9

(10) Ref. #10



IMMUNIS COLUMBIA and INIMICA TYRANNUS AMERICANA.(10) Brasher also may have made for someone's order, verhaas Matthias Ogden in his bid for a Federal mint(11), a GEN. WASHINGTON obverse with an E PLURIBUS UNUM eagle reverse. And somebody from New Jersey, perhaps again Ogden, may have ordered an E PLURIBUS UNUM shield reverse. Trials of these 1786 Brasher products among themselves and with the CONFEDERATIOs led to a number of strange mulings.

The die sinking in 1786 and earlier may have been done by some man in Ephraim Brasher's employ who was quite capable and could space and align the letter punches very professionally. At the end of 1786 or early 1787 the workmanship deteriorated. Perhaps Brasher had let the sinking out to others or perhaps he had hired a less skilled worker.

In 1787 Brasher went off on his own and made his gold Doubloons and Lima-style Doubloons and, either with or without the New York Legislature's approval, some EXCELSIOR-E PLURIBUS UNUM eagle coins and many NOVA EBORAC coppers. These coinages were very likely performed by John Bailey, cutler, of 22 Queen Street, New York City. The die trial of the first 1787 eagle reverse was a muling with a CONFEDERATIO causing a continuous series of mulings dating back to 1785.\*

In 1788 and 1789 the New Jersey partners were at odds, so too was the Machin Mill's group while James Jarvis, Abel Buell, Samuel Broome, and partners were heavily engaged in the Federal copper coinage and had assigned part of their Connecticut rights to Eli Leavenworth. Brasher may have received a good sized order for dies from Leavenworth for the 1788 coinage and Bailey may have struck the coins in New York City.

(10) Ref. #10 (11) Ref. #11 \*See Crosby PLATE VII

Bailey and Brasher very definitely made a group of 1788 New Jersey coins before April of that year under authority from someone of that franchise. There are two distinct groups of New Jersey dies with quatrefoils on them and there are no mullings between the two groups. One group (Maris 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, bb, cc, dd) was struck only on clean copper planchets and was very likely supplied to Bailey. Planchets of this group are the same size, as NOVA EBORACs.

The other group (Maris 70, 71, 72, 73, x, y, z, aa) is found struck over Connecticut coppers, British half-pence, Vermont coppers, and even on brass planchets and may have been supplied to Matthias Ogden, the alledged perpetrator of these overstrikes, at his Elizabeth, New Jersey, home on Water Street (now 941-959 Elizabeth Avenue). (12) Ogden, or whoever the overstriker was, had dies from another silversmith and was banging them on the above plus Georgius Triumpho and worn coins but mostly onto Connecticut coppers. The remainder of what Walter Breen calls the plaited mane group (Maris 34-V, 35-W, and 40-b) also appear as overstrikes on the same kinds of undertypes and have the same style of horseheads and sprigs as these dies. This leads to the possibility that Brasher made them. These are muled with Van Voorhis dies and also appear on large planchets.

The agreement between Reuben Harmon's group in Rupert, Vermont, and Thomas Machin's group in Newburgh, N.Y., has been thought to have been made so that Harmon could obtain dies from James F. Atlee of Machin's Mills. The writer believes that the dies accredited (by Crosby) to Atlee were actually made by Daniel Van Voorhis and that what Harmon needed was not dies, since he could get plenty from Van Voorhis, but planchets. When relations

between the groups were strained, Thomas Machin was forced to obtain a new source of dies and might have gone to Ephraim Brasher; or Machin's partner, Samuel Atlee, may have gone to John Bailey, since these two sat together in the 1787 General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen. Brasher may have made for Machin three Vermont dies (Ryder 13 obs. and 27 obs. and rev.) and several dies for counterfeit British halfpence. These were used separately and muled with dies of counterfeits (14) that had previously been obtained from Van Voorhis.

Since varieties of 1787 Vermont coppers, the ones with Buell's device punches, are found struck over NOVA CONSTELLATIOs we might presume that Harmon, in his search for blanchets before the Machin Mill's agreement, had contacted persons with a left-over supply of such coins. As has been shown above (not with any primary proof, it is agreed) that Ephraim Brasher was connected with the NOVA CONSTELLATIOs then maybe Harmon bought the left-overs from him and, perhaps inadvertently, obtained an old worn IMMUNE COLUMBIA die in the load.

Harmon's earliest coins bear the legend THE FOURTEENTH STAR but the devices coupled with this early propaganda pitch have an eye with thirteen rays interspersed with thirteen stars. The devices appear to be the same workmanship as the ones on the NOVA CONSTELLATIOs while their motif is much more appropriate to that series and this leads the writer to suspect that Brasher supplied Harmon's early punches. The Vermont "sun over mountain" punch is closely related to the theme of the New York coat-of-arms and may have been initially intended for a New York medal or coin, and it is very similar to the theme on Brasher's Doubloons.

It was interesting to note in a letter of

(14) Ref. #14

Mr. Walter Breen's in the September 1963, Colonial Newsletter, that the Connecticut 1788 coins, from dies the writer feels were made by Brasher, are the only Connecticuts that come struck over NEW CONSTITUTIONS. This is another (loose) connection between Brasher and these coins.

In summary --- The writer is proposing that all the dies mentioned in this article (omitting the exception noted) were made in Ephraim Brasher's firm and that coinages in which he was directly involved were carried out by John Bailey at his "mint" at 22 Queen Street. As a further speculation, it may be that most of these coins were made in New York City and that earlier patterns were minted on Little Dock Street. This is a fanciful story, perhaps it may turn out to be historical fiction for the delight of a few numismatists, but it does paint a smooth flowing picture and not a disjointed one such as has been obtained from "building-up" on the tradition that these are "dies by Wyon".

Everett T. Sipsey

Morristown, N. J.  
July 12, 1964

# REFERENCES

- #1 EARLY COINS OF THE UNITED STATES, Sylvester Colby, private printing, Boston, 1875.
- #2 WYON'S MEMOIRS, Nickolas Carlisle, Printed by R. Nichol, London, 1837
- #3 BRASHER AND BAILEY, Walter Breen, A.N.S. Centennial Issue, New York, 1958
- #4 MEMOIR OF JOHN BAILEY, by Underhill(?), Manuscript Section, New York Historical Society, N.Y.C.
- #5 ARTS AND CRAFTS OF NEW YORK 1777-1799, Gottsman, New York Historical Society
- #6 UNITED STATES PATTERNS OF 1792, Walter H. Breen, Printed by Wayte Raymond, New York, 1954
- #7 THE BRASHER DOUBLOON, by Vernon Brown, The Numismatist, June 1964
- #8 SILVERSMITHS OF NEW JERSEY, Carl M. Williams, McManus Publishing Co., Philadelphia, 1945
- #9 JAMES JARVIS AND THE FUGIO COINAGE, Damon Douglas, microfilm at A.N.S.
- #10 NUMISMATIC JOURNAL, Breen and Glaser, November 1961
- #11 ORIGINAL MINT OF NEW JERSEY COPPERS, Damon G. Douglas, New Jersey Historical Society, July 1951
- #12 Monograph by John Kean Leads, Elizabeth (N.J.) Free Library, 1957
- #13 FRANK'S DIRECTORY OF NEW YORK CITY, 1786 and 1787, microfilm copies at New York Public Library
- #14 VERMONT NUMISMATIC ENIGMA, Eric P. Newman, A.N.S. Centennial Issue, New York, 1958
- #15 AMERICAN SILVERSMITHS AND THEIR MARKS, Enscoe, Private Printing, 1927
- #16 ARTS AND CRAFTS OF PHILADELPHIA, MARYLAND, AND SOUTH CAROLINA, A.C. Prime, Walpole Society, 1932
- #17 COLONIAL NEWSLETTER, December 1963, Letter of Walter Breen

August 18, 1964

Mr. Everett Sipsey  
6 East Lake Blvd.,  
Morristown, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Sipsey:

Thank you for sending your article "Dies By Wyon" which I read with much interest.

Since you are not planning to publish the item I feel that I should not comment on many things which you stated. However, I do wish to refer you to my article in the January 1960 Serapbook which will clear up a few items with which you may not be familiar.

I presume you know the danger of publishing speculative items as this only hurts you when they are proven otherwise. For example, I do not agree that the Brasher Spanish Doubloon is bona fide and I wonder if Breen does, even though he wrote that it was.

I certainly was interested in your comments concerning the die punch relationship between the Nova Constellatio and Nova Eboracae. I will study this. Actually, I think the punches were brought over from England and that the two were made by different die makers.


Good luck in your research and please feel free to send in anything that you wish.

I will try to get you the addresses you requested.

Sincerely yours,

ERIC P. NEWMAN NUMISMATIC  
EDUCATION SOCIETY

EPN/atb

  
Eris I. Newman  
Numismatic Education Society  
6450 Cecil Avenue  
St. Louis, 5, Missouri

Dear Mr. Newman:

Thank you for your very kind letter of August 18, 1964 concerning "Dies by Wyon". As you can imagine it was not too long before I had a copy of the January 1960 Scrapbook.

It was a surprise to realize from your article that circulation of the 1783 Nova Constellatio's may have been held up for two or three years or else were pre-dated. It was interesting to note that the tradition on Wyon still emanates only from Bushnell's notes.

<sup>h</sup> I would very much like to hear from you as to whether or not you concur with my comparison of the Nova Constellatio and Nova Liborac letter punches.

Regarding "dies by Wyon" please cross out the paragraph numbered 9 on page 3 -- this idea is dead wrong. I had an error in my note book which lead me to that thought.

This letter to you is overdue. The reminder came from the recent NUMISMATIST and your knowledgeable article on AUCTORI FLEBIS fakes which, I am sure, is appreciated by all colonial collectors and dealers.

Very truly yours,

*Everett Sipsy*

December 11, 1964

  
Dear Mr. Sipsey:

I am just too involved with other research to go through my data in detail with respect to your letter of November 14.

Offhand, I can assure you the Nova pieces were not predated. The Wyo~~n~~ tradition is from much more than Bushnell's notes. It is his style of work.

As to whether Nova Constellatio letter punches and Nova Eborac letter punches are the same, tell me what particular letters lead you to this conclusion. There are many interlocking letter punches of coins made during this period and it is worth working on.

Thank you for commenting on the Auctori Plebis. There will be an article, shortly, on the fake FRANKLIN PRESS and another article on the fake LONDON ELEPHANT TOKENS.

Keep up your research and let me hear from you.

Sincerely yours,

ERIC P. NEWMAN NUMISMATIC  
EDUCATION SOCIETY

EPN/atb